

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
FDRE-00 HEW-04 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 HA-05 CA-01
SCS-06 ICA-11 EB-08 /086 W
-----069717 112102Z /73

R 110925Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9259
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY ROME
AEMBASSY RANGOON 544
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD, ROME FOR FODAG
DEPT PASS ALSO AID/ASIA AND AID/OFDA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR PINT EAID BG BM
SUBJECT: RELIEF ASSISTANCE FOR ARAKANESE REFUGEES

SUMMARY. BDG HAS REQUESTED U.N. AGENCIES AND PRIVATE
AND VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS (PVO) ASSISTANCE IN RELIEF
OPREATIONS FOR ARAKANESE REFUGEES. RESPONSE FROM MOST
AGENCIES HAS BEEN POSITIVE BUT RELIEF EFFORTS AT THE MOMENT
APPEAR TO BE SOMEWHAT DISORGANIZED AND COORDINATION LESS
THAN ADEQUATE. END SUMMARY.

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP)
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REPRESENTATIVE HAS ADVISED USAID THAT HE HAS RECEIVED
FORMAL REQUEST FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE FROM BDG. REQUEST
SPECIFIES 2,520 METRIC TONS (MT) WHEAT, 2,520 MT RICE
OR SOY-FORTIFIED SORGHUM GRITS (SFSG) AND 504 MT FISH
PROTEIN CONCENTRATE (FPC). THESE QUANTITIES SUFFICIENT TO PROVIDE
FOOD FOR 200,000 QUOTE DISPLACED PERSONS UNQUOTE (WFP
REP'S TERMINOLOGY) FOR 90 DAYS AT FOLLOWING DAILY RATION

RATE:

A. ADULTS - 100 GRAMS SFSG/RICE, 200 GRAMS WHEAT, 40 GRAMS FPC.

B. MINORS - ONE HALF THE ADULT RATE.

WFP HAS FORWARDED REQUEST TO ROME BUT AGREED TO PROVIDE 500 MT WHEAT IMMEDIATELY.

2. MINISTRY OF RELIEF AND REHABILITATION (MRR) HAS ISSUED SEPARATE REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO EXPATRIATE PVOS. REQUIREMENTS, IN ORDER OF PRIORITY ARE, SHELTER HOUSING, SANITATION FACILITIES, TRANSPORT, FOOD AND CLOTHING. IN REQUEST TO PVOS, MRR NOTED THERE ARE PRESENTLY 80,000 TO 100,000 REFUGEES IN THE CAMPS AND 6,000-7,000 PER DAY ARE ARRIVING. MRR EXPECTS A TOTAL OF 200,000 BY THE END OF THE MONTH.

3. PVOS HAVE RESPONDED AS FOLLOWS:

A. FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY-400 PRE-FAB HOUSES, EACH CAPABLE OF SHELTERING 6/8 PEOPLE.

B. CARITAS - 5 BARRACKS, 150 FEET BY 12 FEET.

C. OXFAM - 4 MILLION SQ. FT. OF POLYETHYLENE SHEETING.

D. OTHERS - HAVE PROMISED CLOTHING, WHEAT, SURVIVAL BISCUITS, NON-FAT DRY MILK, BLANKETS AND EGG POWDER.

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4. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. PVO REPRESENTATIVES HAVE ADVISED THEY BELIEVE THERE IS BUREAUCRATIC IN-FIGHTING GOING ON BETWEEN MRR, WHICH IS COORDINATING THE PVO EFFORT, AND THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MFA), WHICH IS APPARENTLY COORDINATING THE U.N. EFFORT. THE SITUATION IS VERY UNCLEAR BUT AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, MFA WOULD PREFER U.N. HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR) TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR RELIEF OPERATION AS THIS WOULD IMPLY SUPPORT FOR BANGLADESH'S POSITION THAT ARAKANESE MUSLIMS ARE BURMESE CITIZENS WHO HAVE BEEN FORCED TO FLEE THEIR COUNTRY. FYI. UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE ARRIVING DACCA TODAY TO ASSESS SITUATION. END FYI. FI UNHCR DECIDED PROBLEM DID NOT FALL WITHIN ITS JURISDICTION ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE IS U.N. DISASTER RELIEF OFFICE (UNDRO). MRR, ON OTHER HAND, MAY BE MORE CONCERNED WITH IMMEDIATE PROBLEM OF PROVIDING RELIEF BECAUSE QUESTION OF U.N. RESPONSIBILITY MAY TAKE SOME TIME TO SETTLE.

5. AN MRR OFFICIAL ADVISED USAID OFFICER THAT, WHILE PVO ASSISTANCE IS NEEDED IN PROVIDING ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES, IT WAS NOT REPEAT NOT MRR'S INTENTION TO ALLOW THE INTERNATIONAL PVOS TO DIRECTLY PARTICIPATE IN RELIEF OPERATIONS IN THE CAMPS

AT THE PRESENT TIME. HE STATED THAOMGIVEN THE SENSITIVITY OF THE BORDER AREA, INVOLVEMENT OF EXPATRIATE PERSONNEL MIGHT COMPLICATE MATTERS.

6. AN OXFAM REPRESENTATIVE ADVISED US THAT, BASED ON HIS INTERVIEWS WITH THE REFUGEES, THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN PERPETRATED ON THE REFUGEES BY THE BURMESE ARMY WAS CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN REPORTED IN THE LOCAL PRESS. SOME REFUGEES STATED THERE HAD BEEN A RECENT UPSWING IN QUOTE INSURGENCIES UNQUOTE IN BURMA WHICH LED TO A GREATLY EXPANDED BURMESE ARMY PRESENCE IN THE BORDER AREA. THE CHECKING OF RESIDENCE CERTIFICATES AND CONSTANT VERBAL HARASSMENT HAS FRIGHTENED THE ARAKANESE POPULATION A GREAT DEAL. HOWEVER, ACTUAL VIOLENCE HAS BEEN MINIMAL ACCORDING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO THE OXFAM REPRESENTATIVES.

7. FINALLY, THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION HAS BEEN REQUESTED TO FINANCE AIR TRANSPORT TO FERRY IN SUPPLIES, PRIMARILY THE POLYETHYLENE SHEETING, FROM ABOARD DIRECTLY TO CHITTAGONG. AND, PERHAPS, EVEN DIRECTLY TO THE AIRPORT AT COX'S BAZAAR. SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

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